

Congressman Jesse Jackson, Jr., today voted "Yea" on H.R. 810, the Stem Cell Research Enhancement Act, which passed the House with a vote of 238 Yeas and 194 Nays. The Senate is expected to pass the bill, but President Bush has promised that if they do he will exercise his first veto. Congressman Jackson said, "I hope President Bush won't put his personal theology, conservative ideology and right-wing politics over medical and scientific progress. Stem Cells hold too much promise to mitigate pain and suffering in the world to allow bad theology, a rigid ideology and narrow politics to interfere with advancing a culture of life."

"The bill expands federally funded stem cell research, not the creation of embryos *for* research. It allows scientists to use

excess

stem cells derived from embryos created for in vitro fertilization to advance healing and life. Politicizing the issue by mixing embryo stem cell research with abortion is wrong. Embryos are not fetuses. An embryo is a cluster of about 150 cells, known as a blastocyst, which forms a few days after the joining of a sperm and egg. Within the center of this cluster are stem cells, which are like biological blank slates. These cells have the potential to become any of the 200 kinds of cells that make up the human body. Many scientists believe stem cell research could one day be used to treat people living in pain with serious illnesses such as spinal injuries, Alzheimer's, strokes, brain injuries, Parkinson's, diabetes and heart defects.

"With his usual habit misleading the American people - remember WMDs in Iraq and the Social Security *crisis* - President Bush today said 'I...made available for the first time federal funds for embryonic stem cell research in order to explore the potential of these cells.' On August 9, 2001, he announced that there were more than 60 lines available for research - but it turned out to be less than two-dozen and they were tainted and inferior to those being used by private researchers. In truth, President Bush hogtied American scientists with limited and non-useable stem cells, which is why there is a brain drain of scientists to other countries - e.g., to Great Britain, South Korea and elsewhere.

"President Bush says that scientists should use adult rather than embryo stem cells to conduct the research, but the most respected scientists in the world say current evidence suggests that adult stem cells have markedly less potential than those from embryos. The President says he doesn't want to 'take life in order to save life,' but the choice is between using excess embryonic stem cells for healing research or incinerating them. Congress voted to do stem cell research on the 400,000 *surplus* embryos that are currently either *left in storage indefinitely* or *destroyed as medical waste*

. The legislation also requires donors to
give permission

to use their stem cells for research purposes and donors
cannot be compensated
," Jackson concluded.